The Lag Equation

L = ω / κ

A candidate universal principle governing lag, structure, and emergence across physical, biological, cognitive, and social systems

Luke Doel | Independent Researcher | March 2026 | CC0 Public Domain

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1. The Equation

Every system in the universe processes information through constraints. The delay between an input arriving and the system fully resolving it is lag. The Lag Equation states that this delay is determined by a single ratio:

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L = ω / κ
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where:

- L = Lag. The delay between an event and its full resolution in the system. In physical systems: propagation delay. In cognitive systems: processing time. In social systems: response latency. In galactic systems: field update rate.
- ω (omega) = Information mass. The density and weight of the incoming input. In physics: mass-energy density. In cognition: cognitive load. In social systems: complexity of the situation. In ecology: environmental pressure.
- κ (kappa) = System capacity. The bandwidth, processing power, and resources available to the system at the moment of input. In physics: field propagation rate. In cognition: working memory and attention. In social systems: institutional bandwidth. In ecology: carrying capacity.

The equation is not domain-specific. It is a structural statement about any system that processes information through constraints — which, under the Fundamental Information Tendency (FIT), is every system.

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2. What the Equation Implies

2.1 Lag is inevitable

Zero lag requires infinite capacity. No physical system has infinite capacity. Therefore lag is a universal structural property, not an error or inefficiency. It is the mechanism that converts raw information flow into structured behaviour.

2.2 The Goldilocks Zone

Every system has an optimal lag value L_opt determined by its architecture. System quality Q is inversely proportional to deviation from this optimum:

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Q ∝ 1 / |L − L_opt|
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Too much lag (omega >> kappa): stagnation, low function, ghost behaviour. Too little lag (omega << kappa): oscillation, runaway feedback, collapse. Tuned lag (L close to L_opt): coherence, stability, emergence of order.

2.3 Gradients drive behaviour

Lag is rarely uniform across a system. The spatial or temporal variation in lag creates gradients. These gradients are the proximate cause of all observable behaviour — motion, adaptation, structure formation, and emergence. Behaviour is the system's response to its own lag gradient.

2.4 Recursion closes the loop

Behaviour updates the system state. The updated state becomes the next input. This closes the recursive loop: input arrives with weight omega, system processes it at capacity kappa, lag L = omega / kappa produces a gradient, the gradient drives behaviour, behaviour becomes the next input. The loop is the universe computing itself.

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3. Cross-Domain Evidence and Falsifiable Predictions

The following table states the equation's terms in six domains, derives a specific prediction from L = omega / kappa in each, and states a falsification test. No domain-specific parameters are introduced beyond the definitions of omega and kappa in that domain.

Domain	omega (weight)	kappa (capacity)	Prediction	Falsification test
Galactic dynamics (RFIT)	Baryonic mass density in disk	Field propagation rate of substrate	Flat rotation curves without dark matter. Validated: Pearson r=0.9545, 129 SPARC galaxies.	*RFIT predicts Vflat from baryonic mass alone. Already confirmed.*
Dwarf galaxies (EFE)	Stellar mass of dwarf	Reduced by host galaxy's external field	Velocity dispersion suppressed in proportion to external field strength.	*Crater II: RFIT predicts 3.0 km/s vs observed 2.7 km/s. Error 17%.*
Cognition / neurodivergence	Information density of environment	Processing bandwidth of individual	High-omega environments overwhelm low-kappa substrates. Sensory overload is predictable from L = omega/kappa.	*Measure response latency and error rate as function of environmental information density across substrate types.*
Traffic systems	Vehicle density at chokepoint	Road capacity (lanes x speed limit)	Congestion occurs when omega/kappa exceeds critical threshold. Gridlock is L -> infinity.	*Traffic flow data: measure onset of congestion as function of density/capacity ratio.*
LLM coherence	Token density / context complexity	Model parameter count x attention bandwidth	Hallucination rate increases when omega/kappa exceeds threshold. Coherence emerges at critical density crossing.	*Measure hallucination rate as function of context density across model sizes.*
Trauma / psychology	Unresolved information load (Legacy Pain Packets)	Current processing capacity (sleep, safety, resources)	Trauma symptoms intensify when accumulated omega exceeds available kappa. Recovery requires kappa increase or omega reduction.	*Measure symptom severity as function of life stressor load relative to support resources.*

4. Relationship to Existing Frameworks

L = omega / kappa does not replace existing domain theories. It sits above them as a structural principle. Newton's laws, general relativity, information theory, cognitive load theory, and ecological carrying capacity models are all consistent with L = omega / kappa — they are its domain-specific instantiations.

The equation is most closely related to queuing theory (Little's Law: L = lambda W, where L is queue length, lambda is arrival rate, W is wait time) and to the concept of impedance in electrical engineering. The novel claim is that this same structural relationship governs emergence and stability across all information-processing systems including physical ones at the cosmological scale.

The RFIT validation against SPARC galaxy data (r = 0.9545, p = 1.45 x 10^-68, 129 galaxies, zero dark matter parameters) constitutes the strongest existing empirical support for the equation at the physical scale. Full details in the RFIT archive at https://archive.org/details/uneducated-theory

5. Open Questions

- What are the precise units of omega and kappa in physical systems? Dimensional analysis required before the equation can be fully formalised at the quantum scale.
- Does L = omega / kappa produce the correct scaling for quantum decoherence? If so, the equation may bridge classical and quantum regimes.
- Is there a minimum lag — an information-theoretic equivalent of Planck time — below which the equation breaks down?
- How does the equation behave at the cosmological scale? The cosmological constant Lambda may be related to the universal minimum kappa of the substrate.

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Luke Doel | March 2026 | luke@uneducatedtheory.com